THE SATAN'S SHOP

BOOK OF PACTS

A Short and Truthful History of Selling One's Soul

Compiled from the record by Leslie, Contracts.

Published by the Management.

The spirits give nothing for nothing.

The Grimorium Verum

The Management no longer keeps a crossroads. The bargains described in these pages are now conducted online: have your soul appraised, your contract drawn up and personalised, and your signature taken, in red and at your convenience, at satans.shop*. Terms eternal. Delivery instant. No candles required.*

FOREWORD, FROM THE MANAGEMENT

You have, by now, signed something. Do not be alarmed. Almost everyone has, and the paperwork is rarely as binding as the language suggests. We publish this book not as a warning, which would be against our interests, but as a courtesy, which costs us nothing.

The selling of the soul is one of the oldest continuous business relationships in the Western record, older than banking and considerably better documented. For fifteen centuries people have wanted things they could not honestly obtain, and for fifteen centuries a certain office has been willing to discuss terms. What follows is the true history of those discussions. The names are real. The clauses are real. Several of the contracts survive, and we have reproduced the best of them at the back, complete, so that you may see the standard of drafting for yourself.

We have asked our Contracts department to keep its remarks brief and to confine them to the footnotes, where they belong. You will find the history itself accurate, sourced, and, we are told, quite good. Whether that makes it more or less comfortable to read is a matter for you.

Read on. There is no obligation. There is never, technically, any obligation, right up until the moment there is.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE FIRST BUYER

In the sixth century, in a town called Adana on the southern coast of what is now Turkey, a man sells his soul to the Devil. His name is Theophilus, and he is the first person in the Western record to make that bargain in writing. He is also the only one who ever manages to get the contract back.

Theophilus is no rebel and no magician. He is an administrator. He runs the day-to-day business of the diocese of Adana: its money, its property, its staff. He is the trusted deputy who keeps everything working while the bishop takes the credit. So when the old bishop dies, the town turns to Theophilus and asks him to take the office himself.

He says no. He believes he is not worthy of so high a position, and he asks them to appoint someone else instead. It is a small act of modesty, and it will cost him everything.

The new bishop listens to gossip about Theophilus, and one of his first acts is to remove him from his post and give the job to another man. Within days, the most trusted official in the diocese has nothing. He had turned down the top position out of humility, and now he has lost the one he already held.[1]

1. *Note from Contracts.* A capable man who declines a promotion out of sincere humility, and is then stripped of the post he already holds, is the most dependable profile on our books. We wish to be clear that we do not manufacture the grievance. We simply keep an office open, good hours, and let the wronged party find their own way to the door.

FIGURE 1.1. *Theophilus and the Virgin, from the Maastricht Book of Hours (British Library, Stowe MS 17), early fourteenth century. Public domain.*

Humiliated and bitter, Theophilus decides to win his standing back by any means he can find, and he turns to magic. He tracks down a go-between, a sorcerer who can arrange an introduction. In the medieval versions of the story this man is a Jewish conjuror, a detail that reflects the prejudice of the storytellers rather than anything in the history. After dark, the two of them go out together.

A company is waiting in the night, robed in white, with their master standing at the centre of them. The terms he offers are simple and final. Theophilus must renounce Christ, renounce the Virgin Mary, deny his own baptism, and put all of it in writing. Theophilus does exactly that. He draws up a deed of renunciation, seals it, and, by the older accounts, signs it in his own blood. Then he kneels and swears his loyalty.

The bargain holds. His old position is returned to him, and with more honour than before. The bishop who wronged him has a change of heart and reinstates him. Everything Theophilus lost comes back to him, exactly as he was promised.

And then he has to live with what he has done. The knowledge of it grows until he can think of nothing else, and the honour he bought back

turns to ash in his hands. So Theophilus does the thing that almost no one in these stories manages to do in time. He turns back. He confesses the sin and begs to be released from it, and he takes that plea to the only power he believes is stronger than the Devil himself. He shuts himself inside a church of the Virgin Mary and fasts and prays there for forty days.

She comes to him. At first she reproaches him, and she is right to, because he has denied her and her son, in writing and in front of witnesses. But she relents, and she agrees to take up his case. After his long penance she does the thing that turns a simple warning into the founding story of a whole tradition. She gets the contract back. The actual document, lying somewhere in Hell, is recovered and returned to the man who wrote it, laid on his chest while he sleeps. Theophilus wakes with the parchment in his hands. He carries it to the bishop, confesses the whole affair in front of the congregation, and watches it burn. Three days later he dies, forgiven and free.[2]

For the next thousand years the story was told as a miracle, and it spread across Europe. Poets staged it, among them Rutebeuf, who made it into a play in the thirteenth century. Masons carved it above the doors of cathedrals. More than almost any other legend, it fixed the Virgin Mary in the medieval mind as the one advocate who could argue a case against Hell and win. It passed west through a long line of storytellers and finally settled in the *Golden Legend*, the bestseller of its age. A thousand years later, when Germany produces its first version of Faust, the plot is already here. This is Faust, five hundred years early, and the only real difference is the way it ends.

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2. *Note from Contracts.* The recovery of the deed by the Blessed Virgin, acting for a signatory who had no standing to retrieve it himself, remains the only successful return in the company's history. The matter was reviewed at length. The relevant provision, that no third party may reclaim the instrument on the client's behalf, is now Article the Eighth. We were, on that single occasion, out-lawyered, and we have not let it happen since.

Underneath the miracle there is a machine, and the machine has three parts. The first is a renunciation of God, the Virgin, and the sacraments. The second is a written contract, signed and sealed and, from the very beginning, in blood. The third is a way out. In this earliest version the way out is complete: a higher power reaches into Hell, takes the contract, and the man goes free. Every story that follows in this book keeps the first two parts, and works, century after century, to close off the third. The grimoires reduce the rescue to a priest who knows the right words. Goethe reduces it to a bet. The folk tales very nearly lose it. And the contract at the back of this book removes it altogether, cancelling repentance in a single clause and marking the refund unavailable. Theophilus is where the way out begins. He is also very nearly where it ends.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CLERKS OF HELL

The biggest surprise in the whole literature of damnation is how administrative it turns out to be. The imagination promises fire. The documents deliver filing.

FIGURE 2.1. *Lucifuge Rofocale, first minister of the infernal empire. Engraving by Louis Le Breton for Collin de Plancy's* Dictionnaire Infernal, *1863. Public domain.*

The clearest example is a French text that surfaced in the eighteenth century, the *Grand Grimoire*, sometimes called the *Sanctum Regnum*, or the True Governance. Like every book of its kind it lied about its own age. The title page of its most reprinted edition credits one Antonio Venitiana del Rabina, dates the work to 1522, and claims besides that the whole thing descends from the Key of Solomon himself. None of it is true. The text belongs to the seventeen hundreds, and it circulated not among scholars but in the cheap popular editions a farmhand or a footman might actually buy. The pretence of ancient authority is not a flaw in the tradition. It is the tradition. A grimoire with an honest date on the cover would have sold nothing.

The book comes in two halves. The first teaches the making of the Blasting Rod and the finding of buried treasure. The second, the part that concerns us, is the manual of pacts. And what the manual reveals is that Hell, in this period, was imagined to run on the rules of a Parisian notary. There is an offer. There is a counteroffer. There is consideration, the legal term for the thing each side must give so that the bargain will hold. There is a signature, and it has to be in the correct medium. The whole transaction could be set before any solicitor, at a distance of three centuries, and recognised at once.

The preparation reads less like sorcery than like a man assembling the right stationery. On the eve of the operation the sorcerer cuts a rod of wild hazel that has never borne fruit, and he cuts it with a new knife at the precise moment the sun clears the horizon. He arms himself with a bloodstone, called in the text Ematille, and two blessed candles. He draws a triangle on the ground, sets a candle on either side of it, and then inscribes the Holy Name of Jesus beneath, so that the spirits can do him no harm. The man has come to sell his soul to the Devil, and he has taken care to surround himself with the name of God before he does it. It is the surest measure of how far he trusts the party across the table.[3]

He does not deal with Lucifer. Lucifer is an emperor, and emperors do not attend to individual accounts. Below the three great powers, Lucifer, Beelzebuth and Astaroth, whom no operator may bind directly, sits a tier of subordinate ministers and generals, and it is one of these the sorcerer is allowed to summon. His name is Lucifuge Rofocale. The first half of it is plain enough: from the Latin *lux* and *fugere*, he is the one who flees the light, a fitting officer for business conducted between ten at night and two in the morning. His portfolio is wealth. Collin de Plancy's great catalogue of demons, the *Dictionnaire Infernal*, fixes his job title exactly: first minister of the infernal empire, master of all the treasures of the world. He is, in modern terms, the official who signs the cheque.

3. *Note from Contracts.* We have never objected to the candles. A petitioner who wishes to invoke the name of God while signing away everything that name protects is a petitioner with the right instincts for this arrangement, and we welcome the custom. The hazel rod is no longer required. Most now sign with a biro.

FIGURE 2.2. *The Goetic Circle of Pacts, into which the operator retires to conduct the negotiation. Plate from A. E. Waite,* The Book of Ceremonial Magic, *1911. Public domain.*

The conjuration that opens the negotiation is scrupulous about rank. It hails the emperor, begs the goodwill of the princes Beelzebuth and Astaroth, and only then calls the working minister up to do the actual labour, threatening him, should he dally, with the potent words of the great Clavicle of Solomon. There follows a string of barbarous names, Aglon, Tetragram and the rest, words that mean nothing and are meant to compel by their strangeness alone.

And when Lucifuge appears, he is not eager. This is the second surprise, and the better one. The minister of Hell, offered a human soul at no cost to himself, spends the entire encounter trying to wriggle out of the deal. He states his price, the operator’s soul, delivered in twenty years. The operator refuses, and threatens him. Lucifuge withdraws. He is compelled up a second time, and now he makes a counteroffer that is almost nothing but conditions: he will surrender the nearest buried treasure at once, provided the operator sets aside one coin for him on the

first Monday of each month, does not call him more than once a week, and keeps those summonings to the small hours already named. *Take up thy pact*, he says, *I have signed it.*[4]

The pact the operator throws down in return is a single sentence, written by his own hand on virgin parchment and signed in his own blood: *I promise the grand Lucifuge to reward him in twenty years' time for all treasures that he may give me.* It is a small masterpiece of evasion. It promises a reward. It does not name that reward as the soul. It does not concede that the twenty years will ever fall due. A. E. Waite, who translated the text in 1911, noted drily that the wording is "designedly evasive", and that the minister's reluctance to put his mark to such a paper is, on reflection, entirely reasonable. The sorcerer is trying to cheat Hell on a technicality, and Hell can read.

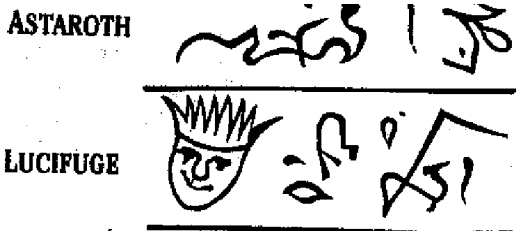

FIGURE 2.3. *the character, or seal, of Lucifuge Rofocale, as given in the* Grand Grimoire. *Public domain.*

This was the heart of it, and it echoes down the whole tradition. The pact was never truly a sale. It was a lawsuit waiting to happen, and both parties knew it. The Church agreed, and built the other half of the machine. A manual of exorcism issued by the Abbe Eynatton in 1678

4. *Note from Contracts.* Our published hours are still ten until two. We find that souls who can be roused to sign at that hour are, as a class, our most reliable custom. The monthly coin has been retained. It is now collected by direct debit, which the parchment did not anticipate but which this department regards as an improvement.

preserves the counter-formula: a priest, armed with the correct words, could compel the demon to surrender the document, and a soul that had signed itself away by candlelight could be handed back by breakfast. So the deed was binding, and the deed was also cancellable, and centuries of ink were spent in the narrow gap between those two facts. That gap is where the entire drama of the Faustian pact would later be staged.[5]

What the *Grand Grimoire* grasped, and what makes it far more modern than it has any right to be, is that damnation is a paperwork problem. The soul is not seized in a thunderclap. It is acquired slowly, through a document, subject to terms, on a schedule, by an official who would frankly rather be doing something else. Hell is not a furnace. It is an office. The office is open, the hours are posted, and someone is at the desk.

5. *Note from Contracts.* The Eynatton loophole has since been closed. We refer the reader to our current position on refunds, restated in the specimen deed at the back of this book, under Article the Eighth. Repentance remains available. It is simply no longer effective.

CHAPTER THREE: THE TRUE AND THE FALSE PACT

In 1629 a small book appears in France, and on its title page it claims to have been written by a Pope.

The Pope is Honorius the Third, dead for four hundred years. The book is a manual for commanding demons. Between its prayers and its fragments of the Catholic Mass sit the instructions for summoning spirits and bending them to the operator's will: the words to say, the animal to sacrifice, the passages of the liturgy to turn to the purpose. This is black magic wearing the robes of the Church, published under the name of a saint's own office. The Grimoire of Honorius was the most scandalous book of its kind for exactly that reason. It did not look like sorcery. It looked like religion.[6]

6. *Note from Contracts.* The Grimoire of Honorius bound the Mass and the conjuration of demons into one volume, under a Pope's name, which our compliance team regards as three separate problems. We keep liturgy and sorcery in different departments, on different floors, for reasons that are partly theological and mostly tax.

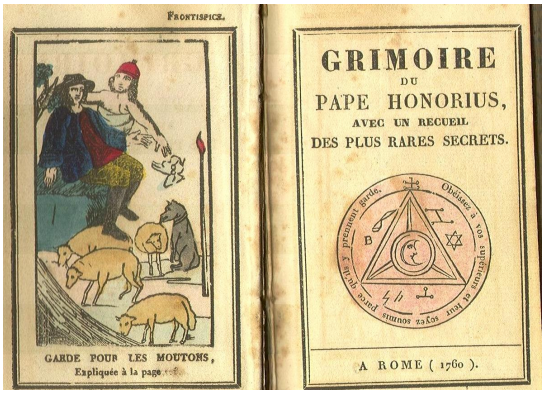

FIGURE 3.1. *title page of the Grimoire of Honorius, attributed to Pope Honorius III. Public domain.*

The lie on the cover was not unusual. It was the rule. A few decades later another famous handbook, the Grimorium Verum, the True Grimoire, announced on its own title page that it was the work of one Alibeck the Egyptian, printed at Memphis in 1517. It was written in the seventeen hundreds, and Memphis was Rome. Grimoires lie about their age the way the Grand Grimoire did, and for the same reason. An old book frightens, and a new one has to earn it.

Still, the Grimorium Verum is worth opening for a single sentence, because it states plainly a thing the whole tradition rests on. There are, it says, two kinds of pact. There is the manifest pact, and there is the tacit pact.

The manifest pact is the one everyone pictures. It is explicit. The magician summons the spirit, sets out his terms, and seals the agreement in words, or in writing, or in blood. The Grand Grimoire's long night of haggling with Lucifuge is a manifest pact. So is Faustus's deed of gift. So was the forged sheet produced at Loudun. It is a visible act, done on purpose, by someone who knows what they are doing.

The tacit pact is the quiet one, and it is far larger. It is implicit. It needs no summoning, no signature, and no stated terms. On this doctrine, a person enters a tacit pact whenever they try to bring about a result that only a demon could deliver, whether or not the demon is named, whether or not they even believe in him. Mutter the right nonsense over a wound to close it, and if the words hold no power of their own, and God is not in the habit of lending them any, then something else is, and a deal has been done. The bargain is sealed by the act itself. Nobody has to sign.

This was not a fringe notion. It was mainstream theology. Augustine argued it in the fourth century, and Thomas Aquinas hardened it in the thirteenth: that every superstition, every charm, every scrap of magic carries within it at least a tacit compact with Hell. The eighteenth-century theologian Bergier, writing a standard work of reference, set out the consequence without flinching. The village girl who draws lots to learn the name of her future husband, the wise-woman with her herbs and her muttered formulas, the quack who takes "Abracadabra" seriously: all of them, by this reasoning, have made a pact with the Devil, and not one of them ever meant to.[7]

FIGURE 3.2. *the seal, or character, of a spirit, from the Grimorium Verum. Public domain.*

7. *Note from Contracts.* The doctrine of the tacit pact is, from our side of the desk, the finest theology ever written. It enrols the customer with no paperwork, no consent, and no knowledge on their part. Every horoscope read in earnest, every wish made on a candle, every ladder walked around, brings the wisher within our terms. We did not draft the doctrine. We have simply never felt any pressing need to correct it.

That doctrine becomes something else entirely once it is loose in a courtroom. A manifest pact needs evidence. It calls for a document, a confession, a witness. A tacit pact needs none of these. It can be inferred from an act, the act can be almost anything, and the accused cannot bring the contract forward to be examined, because there never was one. Loudun needed a forged pact to burn a priest. The tacit-pact doctrine meant that elsewhere no forgery was required at all. A pointed finger and a folk remedy would serve. This is the reasoning that runs underneath the witch trials, the machinery that let the net be cast so wide, and it is how many thousands of people who had signed nothing went to their deaths over a contract that existed only as an idea.

So the tradition now holds two pacts at once. The manifest one is dramatic, deliberate, and rare, and almost no one ever signs it. The tacit one is invisible, unintended, and everywhere, and it can be laid at the door of anyone who has ever knocked on wood and half meant it. The Devil’s contract had grown until it no longer needed a contract, or a signature, or even a customer who knew they were buying. Only one line in the whole literature stands against it, and the grimoires state it flatly: the spirits give nothing for nothing. If that is true, then a person who has been given nothing has perhaps promised nothing in return. It was never much of a defence. For most of the accused, it was the only one they had.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE DOCTOR OF WITTENBERG

A scholar sits alone in his study at midnight with a knife and an open vein. He has agreed to sign away his soul, and the buyer has asked for the signature in blood. He cuts his arm, dips the pen, and begins to write. Then the blood thickens and stops. It will not flow, and for a moment the deed cannot be finished, as though his own body were trying to talk him out of it.

This is the most famous signing in the whole history of the pact, and it comes from Christopher Marlowe's play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, written around 1592. But the man at the desk was real once, or began as someone real. Johann Faust was a German wanderer of the early sixteenth century, an astrologer and alchemist and showman who told fortunes, claimed miracles, and left a trail of unpaid inns and scandalised townspeople across the Holy Roman Empire. When he died, around 1540, the manner of it was strange enough that people decided the Devil had come to collect. The stories grew after him. In 1587 a printer in Frankfurt named Johann Spies gathered them into a book, the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, the first Faust in print. Its shape is the one everyone now knows. A brilliant scholar has exhausted everything the university can teach him, wants more, and conjures a demon named Mephistopheles. The demon offers a deal: twenty-four years of service, knowledge and pleasure, anything Faust asks for, in exchange for his soul when the term is up.

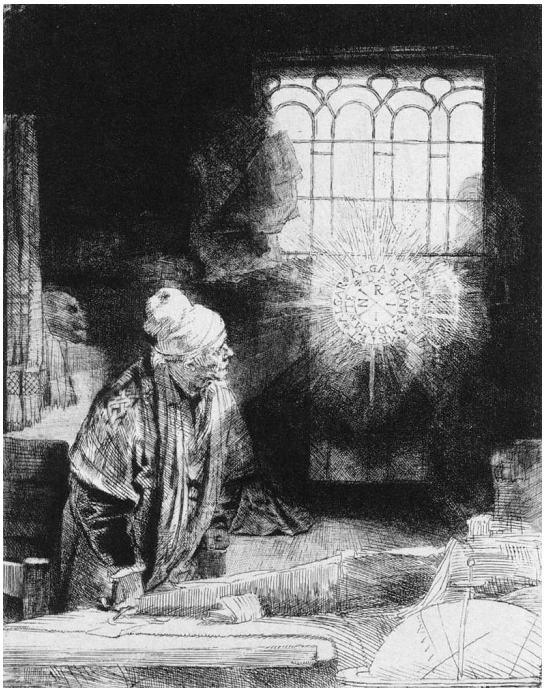

FIGURE 4.1. *Faust in his study, confronted by the spirit. Etching by Rembrandt, c.1652. Public domain.*

An English translation crossed the Channel within a few years, and it reached Christopher Marlowe. His *Doctor Faustus* takes the cheap chapbook and turns it into tragedy, and the centre of the play is the contract. Marlowe treats it as a legal instrument, because that is what it is. Faustus writes a deed of gift, and he writes it, as the buyer insists, in his own blood. “I, John Faustus, of Wertenberg, Doctor, by these presents, do give both body and soul to Lucifer prince of the east, and his minister Mephistophilis.” He grants them, once the four-and-twenty years are expired, “full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus,

body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever."

The blood that congeals as he signs is a warning, and Faustus half sees it. Words surface on his arm, *Homo, fuge*, man, flee. He reads them and stays. He finishes the deed and says, in a blasphemy that borrows Christ's last words from the cross, *Consummatum est*, it is finished. Then he spends his twenty-four years on conjuring tricks and court pageants, and the wonder slowly curdles into waste. At the end there is no rescue. The clock strikes, the term expires, and Faustus is dragged down exactly as the deed allows, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods. Theophilus, a thousand years earlier, had a way out. Faustus keeps telling himself that he could still repent, and never does, and Marlowe allows him nothing. Signed is damned.[8]

Two hundred years later a young German lawyer picks up the same legend and, slowly, across most of his adult life, rebuilds it from the ground up. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe worked on his *Faust* for close to sixty years, publishing the first part in 1808 and finishing the second in the year he died. And he changed the one thing that everyone had assumed was fixed. He turned the sale into a bet.

Goethe's Faust does not simply swap his soul for a term of years. He wagers it. Mephistopheles will serve him and show him everything the world can offer, and the bet is this: that none of it will ever be enough. If any single moment is so rich and so complete that Faust wants it to stay, he loses. In Bayard Taylor's 1870 translation, the words that would cost him his life are a greeting to that passing moment: "Ah, still delay, thou

8. *Note from Contracts.* Marlowe's deed is the finest drafting of the amateur era, and we say so without embarrassment. "By these presents", "fetch or carry", "body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever": the language was so sound that it survives, very nearly word for word, in the specimen deed at the back of this book. We adjusted the term from a rigid twenty-four years to something more flexible. We kept the rest.

art so fair.” If Faust ever says them and means them, the demon may take him.

FIGURE 4.2. *Mephistopheles appears. Lithograph by Eugène Delacroix, 1828. Public domain.*

It is a small change with an enormous consequence. A sale is certain. The buyer waits out the term and collects. A wager is only a condition, and a condition can go unmet. Faust has staked his soul on his own restlessness, on never once being satisfied, and the whole of Goethe’s enormous poem is the testing of that bet. At the very end Faust is old and blind, and he imagines a future he has helped to build, a free people living on land reclaimed from the sea. The vision moves him, and he speaks the fatal words at last, but in the conditional, of a moment he has

not yet reached. Then he dies. Mephistopheles steps forward to collect the soul he believes he has won, and he does not get it. Angels come down and carry Faust's immortal part up to heaven, and their reason is the hinge of the whole tradition: the man who strives without cease can, in the end, be redeemed. The way out that Theophilus opened, and that Marlowe had bolted shut, is quietly forced open again. Goethe reached back over two centuries of certain damnation and let his signatory walk. [9]

Set the two plays side by side, and the contract changes its mind between them. Marlowe writes the sale at its most absolute: a deed, a blood signature, a fixed term, and no way out at all. Goethe writes the same legend as a wager that a determined man can survive, and hands his hero back his soul on the strength of never having been content. Between them they leave the question that the rest of this book inherits. Once a soul has been signed away, can it ever be recovered. The Middle Ages said yes, by a miracle. Marlowe said no, by the plain terms of the deed. Goethe said yes again, by a loophole. And the lawyers have been closing the loophole ever since.

9. *Note from Contracts.* We record, without warmth, that Goethe released a fully executed client on the ground that he had "striven" throughout the agreement. Striving is not a defence. It never was. The provision the angels relied upon, that continuous effort entitles a signatory to rescue by a third party, has been removed from every contract issued since, and the reader is directed once more to Article the Eighth.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRIEST OF LOUDUN

In a courtroom in western France, in the summer of 1634, the prosecution produces its most extraordinary piece of evidence. It is a contract with the Devil. The document is written in Latin, but written backwards, in mirror script, and scattered across it are strange symbols and marks. At the foot of it are the signatures, and they are not human. Lucifer has signed. So have Beelzebub, Astaroth, Leviathan, Elimi and Satan, each in a reversed hand, because that, the court is assured, is how devils sign their names. The pact has been recovered from Hell, stolen from Lucifer's own files by a demon and delivered up as proof.

The man it will send to the stake never signed it. He never signed anything at all. There was no bargain.

FIGURE 5.1. *the pact of Urbain Grandier, written in reversed Latin and signed by the demons. Produced at his trial, 1634; the sheet survives. Public domain. The book's showpiece image.*

His name was Urbain Grandier, and he was the parish priest of Loudun. He was handsome, brilliant, and vain, a superb preacher and an open womaniser who fathered a child and wrote a tract against the celibacy of priests. He collected enemies the way other clergymen collected relics. The most dangerous of them was Cardinal Richelieu, the most powerful man in France after the king. Years earlier Grandier had been linked to a stinging satire against the Cardinal, and Richelieu was not a man who forgot a slight.

The trouble began in 1632, inside the Ursuline convent in the town. The nuns started to convulse and scream and speak in voices that were not their own. Their prioress, Jeanne des Anges, declared that they were possessed, and that the demons had been sent into them by a man. She named Grandier. He had never been the convent's confessor; he had turned the position down. It made no difference. Under exorcism the nuns thrashed and blasphemed and accused him, and the exorcisms were staged in public, before crowds, as entertainment. The demons were commanded to give their names, and through one shrieking nun after another they obliged: Asmodeus, Astaroth, Leviathan, Behemoth, and the rest.

Richelieu saw what the spectacle was worth. He sent his own commissioner, Jean de Laubardemont, to convene a special tribunal, one that quietly set aside the protections an ordinary court would have owed the accused. And into that tribunal came the pact. The reversed-Latin sheet with the demons' signatures was offered not as a curiosity but as evidence a man could be executed on. It was the written word of Hell, produced against him, alongside a convent of witnesses who could not be questioned, because the court held that they were speaking for devils. A short line of it survives in translation. The demons declare that Grandier is theirs, and that the deal was struck, in the phrase they favour, "in hell, in the council of the devils".

Grandier denied all of it, and he never stopped denying it. They tortured him. The executioners crushed his legs in the wooden boot until the bone splintered, and still he confessed to no bargain, because there was none to confess. On the eighteenth of August 1634 he was carried to the marketplace of Loudun and burned alive. He had been promised the mercy of strangling before the fire was lit. The rope was knotted so that it could not be used.[10]

At Loudun, the paperwork outgrew the Devil. For a thousand years the danger of the pact had been a private thing. A man signed, his own soul was the stake, and the only question that mattered was whether he could ever get it back. Here the danger changes shape entirely. The pact had become so real in the mind of Europe, and so powerful in law, that it no longer needed a sinner to sign it. A forged one, written backwards and signed by no one who exists, was enough to burn a man who had never gone near Hell. The document had slipped free of its author. It could now be used by the living, against the living, and the Devil did not even have to be in the room.

The possessions carried on for years after Grandier was ashes, a paying attraction with its villain conveniently dead. In time the whole affair came to look like exactly what it had been, a political murder dressed up as an exorcism. Aldous Huxley reconstructed it in 1952 in *The Devils of Loudun*, and Ken Russell turned it into a notorious film, and it endures as one of the ugliest things ever done in the Devil's name. The pact endures as well. The real sheet of reversed Latin and infernal signatures can still be seen, the most convincing contract in this book, and the only one that was pure invention.[11]

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10. *Note from Contracts.* For the record, and our lawyers are firm on the point, Urbain Grandier never held an account with this office. No pact was ever issued in his name. The document produced at Loudun did not come from us, and we accept no responsibility for instruments forged in our house style by third parties for ends of their own. We keep a file on everyone who signs. There is no file on Grandier. That is the whole of our defence, and it has the advantage of being true.

11. *Note from Contracts.* We will say, strictly as a technical matter, that the forgery was well made. The reversed hand is correct. Devils do sign backwards, and the convention is an old one; the same reversed signatures close the specimen deed at the back of this book. We mention it only because good workmanship is rare, and because there are few things more unsettling than being impersonated well.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PAINTER'S TWO DEEDS

Every other soul in this book is sold for something. Faust wants knowledge, and then pleasure. The sorcerer of the Grand Grimoire wants buried gold. The men and women dragged before the witch courts are accused of wanting power, or revenge, or the ruin of a neighbour's herd. Christoph Haizmann wanted none of these things. When he signed his name over to the Devil, he was not buying anything. He was asking to belong. He signed to become the Devil's son.

Haizmann was a poor painter, Bavarian by birth, taking work where he could find it in the Austrian lands. In 1668 his father died, and something in him came apart. He fell into a despair he could not climb out of, and he could no longer support himself. In that state he made his bargain. He agreed, in writing, to be the bounden son of the Devil for nine years, and at the end of them to belong to him body and soul. He signed it once, in ink. The following year he signed it a second time, in his own blood.[12]

The surviving terms make the strangeness plain. There is no treasure in them, no power, no woman, no hidden knowledge. Haizmann does not ask the Devil for a single thing that could be spent or shown off. He asks only to be taken in. Every other pact in this book is a contract of sale. This one is a contract of adoption, signed by a grieving young man who wanted, more than he wanted anything the world had to offer, to be someone's child again.

12. *Note from Contracts.* Haizmann executed the agreement twice, once in ink and once in his own blood. For the record, the blood copy governs. Ink can be disputed; blood cannot. It is the one point on which this office and the grimoires have never disagreed.

FIGURE 6.1. *the Devil appears to Haizmann as a prosperous townsman. Votive painting by Christoph Haizmann. Public domain.*

For nine years the arrangement held. As the term ran down, in 1677, Haizmann broke. He was seized by convulsions and by visions, and the terror of what waited at the end of the ninth year drove him to find help. He made his way to Mariazell, the great shrine of the Virgin in the Austrian hills, and threw himself on her mercy. During the exorcisms there, he said, the Devil appeared to him, and the Virgin forced the fiend to hand the contract back. It is Theophilus again, eleven centuries on, the mother of God reaching into Hell to retrieve a deed. But Haizmann

had signed twice, and in his distress he remembered only the copy in blood. He had to return the following spring to recover the one in ink.

Afterward he gave up the world and entered a religious house as a lay brother, and there, for the most part, he found his peace. He was troubled again once or twice before he died in 1700, but he died inside the cloister, which is to say he died belonging to something, which was the only thing he had ever asked for. Before that, though, he did one more thing that matters here. He painted what had happened to him. In a series of votive pictures he set down his meetings with the Devil, who arrives first as a prosperous townsman with a black dog, and comes back in worse and stranger shapes as the years wear on. Those paintings survive. They are the reason a poor man's private catastrophe is still, three centuries later, something that can be looked at directly.

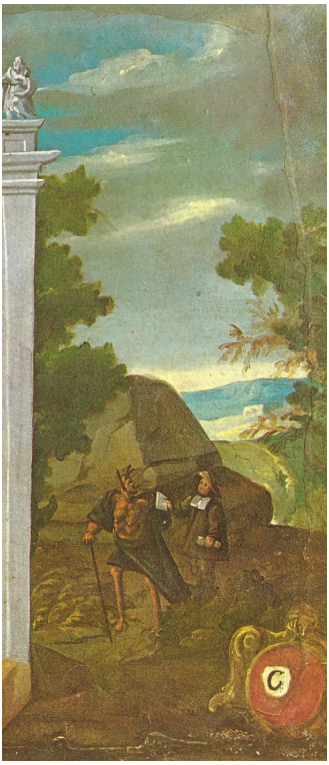

FIGURE 6.2. *the Devil returns in a later, monstrous form. Votive painting by Christoph Haizmann. Public domain.*

In 1923 someone did look at it, very closely. Sigmund Freud obtained the file that the monks at Mariazell had kept, the record of the exorcisms with copies of both pacts, and he read the whole case again from the start. His conclusion was that there had been no bargain at all. There had been a bereavement. Haizmann's collapse followed his father's death, and the Devil he signed himself over to was, Freud argued, a substitute for that father: a powerful male figure who would take him in, provide for him, and be responsible for him, exactly as a father is. The pact to

become the Devil's son was not a sin, and not a crime. It was grief, wearing the only costume the seventeenth century had for it.[13]

Whatever one makes of Freud, and a great deal of him is arguable, something in the tradition changes at his desk. For more than a thousand years the pact had been a matter of sin, and after that a matter of law. Haizmann is the case that turns it into a matter of the mind. From here on, the Devil can be read as a symptom, and the contract as the shape a wound takes in a person who has no other language for it. The old question was whether a soul, once signed away, could ever be recovered. Haizmann leaves a stranger question in its place, and the modern world has been living with it ever since. When a man signs away his soul, is there anyone at all on the other side of the table, or only a person who cannot bear to be alone.

13. *Note from Contracts.* In 1923 a doctor in Vienna reopened the file and decided that we had never been party to it, that the whole affair was mourning, and that the Devil was a figure a grieving mind had built to stand in for a dead father. We have read the paper. We found it unpersuasive. We also found it, in one or two places, uncomfortably close to the bone.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CROSSROADS

There is no lawyer at the crossroads. No parchment, no reversed Latin, no priest with the right words, no long night of haggling over terms. There is only a place where two roads cross, a person who wants something badly, and, if the stories are true, someone already waiting in the dark.

For all the ceremony of the grimoires and the courts, this is how most people, for most of history, actually pictured the bargain. Not as a deed drawn up in a study, but as a meeting at a lonely spot at midnight, sealed with nothing more than a word. The pact in this chapter has shed almost everything the earlier ones carried. It has no document at all.[14]

The crossroads had been uncanny ground in Europe for as long as anyone could remember. It was where suicides and criminals were buried, outside consecrated earth. It was where witches were said to gather and the Devil to walk. To meet a stranger there after dark was to risk meeting something far worse than a stranger. But the deepest version of the idea came from further away. In West African belief the crossroads belongs to a spirit who stands at every threshold and every gate, known in different forms as Legba or Eshu, the one who must be greeted before any other, the keeper of the place where paths and worlds meet. Carried across the Atlantic in the memory of enslaved people, and

14. *Note from Contracts.* A bargain with no document is, from where we sit, not a bargain. It is a rumour. We cannot enforce a handshake, we cannot audit a story told at a crossroads, and for most of the folk period we were quite unable to prove that anybody owed us a thing. It remains the single strongest argument for getting matters in writing, and we have made it, at length, ever since.

pressed for centuries against the Christian Devil, that figure became the man you might meet where the roads cross. And in the folk practice of the American South a precise bargain attached to him. Go to the crossroads alone, at midnight, on a set number of nights, and carry your instrument. On the last night a man will come. He will take the instrument out of your hands, tune it, and give it back. From then on you will be able to play anything.

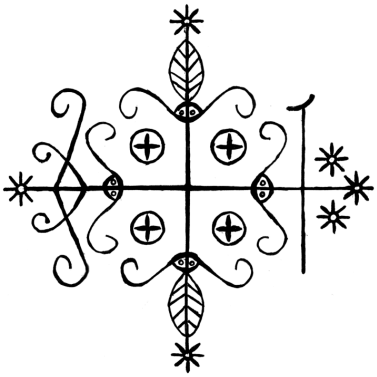

FIGURE 7.1. *a crossroads at night. Period woodcut. Public domain.*

The American literary version arrives in 1824, in a story by Washington Irving called *The Devil and Tom Walker*. Its Devil is a black woodsman that the locals call Old Scratch, and he keeps to a gloomy swamp outside Boston where the great trees each carry the name of a rich and respectable man cut into the bark, marked and ready to be felled. He offers Tom Walker, a hard and miserly man, the buried pirate treasure of Captain Kidd, which lies nearby and is his to give. The condition is that Tom put the money to work in the Devil's service, and he does, as a moneylender who ruins his neighbours with a smile. There is no contract. The deal is struck out loud, between two men in a swamp, with

nothing written down and nothing to sign. Years later, grown old and afraid, Tom tries to cheat his way clear with a sudden show of loud religion, and the Devil comes for him regardless, on a black horse, and carries him off into the marsh. His gold turns to cinders and his house burns to the ground. It is Faust once more, in a New England accent, and the whole grim business is done on a handshake.

The bargain for a skill found its most famous subject a century later, in the Mississippi Delta, in the guitarist Robert Johnson. The story is the one everybody knows. Johnson, it is said, was an unremarkable player who dropped out of sight for a while and returned able to do things on a guitar that no one could explain, because he had gone down to the crossroads at midnight and sold his soul for the gift. Almost none of it survives contact with the record. The legend is largely posthumous, assembled after his death, and the crossroads story was first told not about him at all but about a different bluesman, Tommy Johnson, no relation. Robert Johnson's own *Cross Road Blues* has nothing to do with the Devil. It is about the ordinary terror of a Black man stranded at a junction after dark, in a time and place where that alone could get him killed. But he did write other songs with the Devil in them, and he died young, at twenty-seven, poisoned, and a gift that large and a death that early were more than the story could resist. The pact had shrunk to a rumour, and the rumour was enough.

By the time the crossroads reached the cinema, it had become spectacle. In the 1986 film *Crossroads* a young guitar prodigy and an old bluesman travel south in search of a lost song, and the whole legend is settled, at the last, by a guitar duel against the Devil's own player, fingers against fingers on a darkened stage for the price of a soul. The oldest and vaguest of all the bargains had come back as entertainment, with an amplifier.[15]

FIGURE 7.2. *illustration to Washington Irving's* The Devil and Tom Walker. *Public domain.*

This is the pact stripped to the bone. No deed, no term of years, no clause, no priest to undo it. When everything else has been taken away, what remains is only the story itself, and the story is very old. It is the suspicion, far older than any grimoire, that a gift or a fortune too large for the person holding it must have been paid for somewhere, and that the payment was arranged in the dark, where the roads cross, by someone who never needed it in writing.

15. *Note from Contracts.* We wish to place on record that this office would never agree to settle an account by guitar solo. The result cannot be appealed, it turns far too heavily on the quality of the amplifier, and it rewards precisely the sort of client we can least afford to lose. Accounts are settled by the terms of the deed, and by nothing else, least of all by flair.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HOW TO READ A PACT

Across seven chapters and fifteen centuries the same parts keep turning up, in different hands and different centuries, doing the same work. Laid flat on a table, a standard pact comes apart into eight of them.

It begins with the parties. On one side stands a person, and the person is almost never a villain. He is wronged, like Theophilus, or grieving, like Haizmann, or greedy, or frightened, or simply hungry for something the ordinary world will not hand over. On the other side stand the Powers, arranged in a strict hierarchy whose most important feature is that the top of it is out of reach. Lucifer does not take meetings. Business is done with a middle-ranking official, a Lucifuge Rofocale, who has the authority to sign and a reluctance to match it.

Next comes the renunciation. The signatory gives up God, the Virgin, the sacraments, the whole apparatus of rescue, as Theophilus did in the sixth century. It is the oldest part in the machine, and it is the one the later, worldlier pacts quietly drop.

Third is the consideration, the lawyer’s word for what each side puts in so that the deal will hold. The Powers supply the desire, whichever one it happens to be: knowledge, buried gold, a beautiful face, a father, a gift on the guitar. The signatory supplies the soul. The grimoires state the principle with a bluntness the lawyers never manage. The spirits give nothing for nothing.

After the consideration comes the term. Most pacts run for a fixed span, and the span is suspiciously human. Twenty years in the Grand

Grimoire, twenty-four in Marlowe, nine for Haizmann, who could not wait even that long. The term is the ticking clock the whole drama is timed against, and Goethe is the one who took it out and put a condition in its place, and by doing so very nearly let his man walk.

Then there are the running obligations, the tribute and attendance. A pact is not a single transaction but a relationship, kept up on a schedule. A coin set aside on the first Monday of the month. Homage at fixed hours. A demon called only between ten at night and two in the morning. Something is owed continuously, not once.

There is the signature, and the medium matters more than the wording. Ink can be disputed. Blood cannot, which is why the tradition, and Haizmann, and the modern office all settle on it. The mark is often the demons' as much as the signatory's, set down in a reversed hand, and it was exactly that detail the forgers at Loudun got right when they burned a man on a document he had never touched.

There is repossession, the collection clause. When the term expires the Powers take what they are owed, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, and carry it off to their habitation wheresoever, in Marlowe's flawless phrase. This is the part that never fails.

And last, the escape hatch, which is the part the whole book has been watching. It is there from the very start, when the Virgin lifts Theophilus's charter clean out of Hell. From that height it is narrowed, century by century, to a priest with the correct words, then to a wager, then to a rumour, until it is gone. Every other clause is machinery. This one is the drama, and its slow closing is the plot of the pact as surely as it is the plot of this book.

Underneath all of it sits the strangest assumption of the lot: that Hell keeps a court. The pact only works because both sides behave as though there were somewhere to enforce it, a bench, a clerk, a body of law. For most of this history that law looked exactly like the human kind, offer

and consideration and signature and term. The theologians widened it until a tacit, unspoken version could be fixed on almost anyone. The folk did without the court entirely and shook hands in the dark. But the shape held everywhere. A promise, a price, a due date, and the quiet confidence on one side of the table that the account would be settled in the end.

Every part named here is about to appear at once. The specimen deed at the back of this book is a single modern instrument that gathers all eight, keeps the drafting that worked, and closes the one clause that ever let anybody out.[16]

16. *Note from Contracts.* We say it without pride, since pride is not permitted on this floor, but the specimen deed improves on every pact in this book. It keeps the good language. It drops the fixed term that let clients run out the clock. It retires the blood in favour of a tick-box. And it settles, finally, the matter of the way out. Fifteen centuries of drafting, and we would change almost nothing. That is not a boast. It is a filing note.

CHAPTER NINE: A SPECIMEN DEED

The whole of this book has been the biography of a single document, followed across fifteen centuries as it changed hands and changed its terms. Here it is, assembled. What follows is not one historical pact but a composite of all of them, a specimen deed built from the clauses named in the last chapter, each one drawn from a real agreement made by a real person. It is the form the tradition arrives at when every part is present at once. The provenance of each clause is traced, set off after it, to the century and the chapter it came from. It is also, as it happens, the deed the Management issues today, and there is exactly one clause in it that none of its ancestors possessed.

PACTUM OBLIGATIONIS ANIMÆ

Being the Deed of Gift, Covenant, Renunciation, and Perpetual Obligation of the Soul, made and entered into betwixt the undersigned Petitioner and the Powers Infernal, this instrument to be written upon virgin parchment and subscribed in the proper blood of the party bound.

The Invocation. Emperor Lucifer, Master and Prince of all the revolted Spirits, I entreat thee to favour this adjuration which I address unto thee and unto thy mighty minister LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE. I beg thee also, O Prince Beelzebuth, to be my protector in this undertaking. O Count Astaroth, be propitious unto me. Come hither, all ye who are named and sealed below, quit your dwellings wheresoever they may lie, and attend upon the covenant I now make of mine own will,

unconstrained, unpersuaded, and in the full and waking possession of my wits. I call you by the words that compel, and by the terrible names of the great Clavicle: *AGLON, TETRAGRAM, VAYCHEON, STIMULAMATON, EZPHARES, RETRAGRAMMATON, OLYARAM, IRION, ESYTION, EXISTION, ERYONA, ONERA, ORASYM, MOZM, MESSIAS, SOTER, EMANUEL, SABAOTH, ADONAY: te adoro, et te invoco. Amen.*

> PROVENANCE. The invocation, the hierarchy that runs from Lucifer down to the working minister Lucifuge Rofocale, and the string of barbarous names all come from the Grand Grimoire, eighteenth century (Chapter Two).

The Recital. WHEREAS I, ____ of ____, being of the age of ____ years and sound in body if not in soul, have long hungered after those things that are denied to men within the ordinary compass of nature, namely knowledge without labour, wealth without inheritance, favour without merit, and the lengthening of my pleasures beyond the mean and grudging portion allotted to my kind; AND WHEREAS I know full well, and do here set my hand to the knowing, that the Spirits give nothing for nothing, and that the guileful friend becometh in the end an open enemy, and that what I purchase this night I purchase at the one price that cannot be counterfeited, refused, nor recovered; NOW THEREFORE, by these presents, and in consideration of the grants hereinafter written, I do freely bargain, sell, give, and assure over both my body and my soul in manner following.

> PROVENANCE. “The Spirits give nothing for nothing” and “the guileful friend becometh an open enemy” are the principles of the Grimorium Verum (Chapter Three). “By these presents” is the legal formula of Marlowe’s deed of gift (Chapter Four).

Article the First. Of the Grant made by the Powers Infernal. We, the influential Lucifer, the elder Satanas, Beelzebuth, Leviathan, Astaroth, Asmodeus, Elimi, and Lucifuge Rofocale, together with the others whose marks stand at the foot of this deed, have this day accepted and do accept the covenant and person of the said Petitioner, who from this hour is ours. And unto him do we promise, grant, and covenant to deliver: the love of women and the flower of virgins; the respect of monarchs and the deference of the proud; honours unearned, lusts unrebuked, and powers beyond his station. The treasures concealed within the earth, and the nearest of them to be carried away in his own hands upon the perfecting of this deed. The revelation of the most impenetrable secrets in all the courts and cabinets of the world. The Hand of Glory, and the opening of that which is sealed. Power to call down hail and tempest upon any appointed place, and to command a spirit to labour in his stead through the hours of the night. And to perform things so astounding that no living person, beholding them, shall fail to fall into utter bewilderment.

> PROVENANCE. The grant descends from Grandier's pact at Loudun, 1634 (Chapter Five): the phrase "who is ours", the itemised delights, and the annual seal of blood are lifted straight from it. The buried treasure and the Hand of Glory are the Grand Grimoire's (Chapter Two).

Article the Second. Of the Spirit assigned to Service. And that the said Petitioner want no instrument by which these grants are made good, we assign unto him a ministering spirit, to wit MEPHISTOPHILIS, upon these conditions inviolate: first, that the Petitioner may become a spirit in form and in substance; secondly, that the said Mephistophilis shall be his servant, and at his command; thirdly, that he shall do for

him and bring unto him whatsoever he desireth; fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber invisible, and none but the Petitioner shall perceive him; and lastly, that he shall appear unto the said Petitioner at all times, and in whatsoever form or shape the Petitioner shall please to appoint.

> PROVENANCE. The ministering spirit and its five conditions are Marlowe's, from Doctor Faustus, around 1592 (Chapter Four). Mephistophilis keeps his name.

Article the Third. Of the Renunciation and Homage of the Petitioner. In consideration whereof, I the said Petitioner do here renounce, abjure, and put from me the other God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Virgin his mother, and all the saints and angels of heaven, the apostolic and Roman Church, and every one of its sacraments; and I renounce my baptism, and the holy chrism wherewith I was sealed. And I acknowledge thee, my lord and master Lucifer, as my god and my prince, and I promise to serve and to obey thee so long as I shall live; and to do thee homage thrice in every day; and to render unto thee, once in the year, a seal of blood.

> PROVENANCE. The renunciation of God, Christ and the Virgin is the oldest clause in the deed, Theophilus of Adana, sixth century (Chapter One). The homage thrice daily and the yearly seal of blood are Grandier's (Chapter Five).

Article the Fourth. Of Tribute, Attendance, and the Hours of Calling. And it is further covenanted and agreed between the parties: that the Petitioner shall set apart and render unto the Spirit one coin upon the first Monday of every month; that he shall not call upon the Spirit oftener than once in the week, and then only between the hour of ten at night and the hour of two in the morning; that the tribute of blood

appointed above shall not fail nor be delayed; and that so long as these renders are faithfully performed, the grants of the First Article shall stand unto him full and unbroken.

> PROVENANCE. The monthly coin, the once-a-week summoning, and the hours of ten till two are the Grand Grimoire's tribute schedule (Chapter Two).

Article the Fifth. Of the Term of Years and the Bond of Sonship. The said Petitioner shall live upon the earth of men, in the enjoyment of the aforesaid grants, for the full term of ____ and twenty years from the date hereof, and shall in that space be accounted the bounden son of his master Lucifer, bound in body and in soul. And upon the expiration of the said term, the articles above written remaining inviolate, the Petitioner shall of his own accord surrender himself, and shall thereafter join us and be of our company, to abide in our habitation world without end.

> PROVENANCE. The fixed term of years is Marlowe's and the Grand Grimoire's (Chapters Four and Two). "The bounden son, bound in body and soul" is Haizmann's, 1668 (Chapter Six).

Article the Sixth. Of the Moment wherein the Bond may fall due before its Term. And whereas the Petitioner esteemeth himself never to be satisfied by any pleasure this world or the next can offer, it is covenanted that the bond may fall due before its term upon this condition following: that if ever there come a moment so charged with delight that the Petitioner, beholding it, shall say unto that moment, "Ah, linger a while, thou art so fair," and shall wish it to remain and not to pass, then in that same hour let the tale of his days be told and his

debt esteemed due; then may the Powers lay hold upon him, and the time be past and done for him.

> PROVENANCE. The moment, and the words “Ah, linger a while, thou art so fair”, are Goethe’s wager (Chapter Four). In Goethe the condition is the hope of an escape. Here it is turned into a trap.

Article the Seventh. Of the Power of Repossession. And I do furthermore grant unto the said Powers, the said term being expired, or the said moment being come, full power and licence to fetch or to carry the said Petitioner, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever, and that without let, hindrance, sanctuary, or appeal.

> PROVENANCE. “Full power to fetch or carry… body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever” is Marlowe’s, almost word for word (Chapter Four).

Article the Eighth. Of Repentance Foresworn, and Cancellation Denied. And forasmuch as it is known to me that men have sought, by exorcism and by contrition, to compel the Spirit to restore such deeds as this and to render them void, I do here, being yet unconstrained, foreswear and put from me every such remedy. I renounce the intercession that would recover this parchment out of infernal keeping; I renounce the contrite heart and the late-come tear; and I declare that no exorcism, recantation, nor prayer of mine or of another shall be pleaded to unmake what I this night have freely made. What is written is written, and by me, and shall not be blotted out.

> PROVENANCE. This clause has no ancestor. It inverts the rescue of Theophilus (Chapter One) and the priestly buyback preserved in the

> Grand Grimoire (Chapter Two), and forecloses the way out that every earlier pact left open. It is the tradition's one true invention.

The Execution. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, having read and understood the whole of this deed, and having been warned that the blood wherewith I sign is a fluid of no common kind, I have opened a vein of mine own body and have subscribed this covenant with mine own blood, upon virgin parchment, of my free and unforced will. Given and perfected this ____ day of ____, in the year ____. By me, _____ (in his own blood). AND WE, the Powers aforesaid, in council assembled, do accept, ratify, and set our marks unto this covenant of the Petitioner, who is ours: LUCIFER, Emperor. BEELZEBUTH, Prince. ASTAROTH, Grand Duke. LUCIFUGE ROFOCALE, Prime Minister. SATANAS. LEVIATHAN. ELIMI. ASMODEUS. *(the marks of the Powers being set in the reversed hand, as is their custom.)* DONE IN HELL, IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DEVILS.

> PROVENANCE. The blood and the virgin parchment are the Grand Grimoire's (Chapter Two). The reversed signatures of the Powers and the closing line, "Done in hell, in the council of the devils", are Grandier's, from Loudun (Chapter Five).

Read down the margin and the whole history is there in a single sheet: a sixth-century renunciation, a French treasure ritual, an English deed of gift, a German wager, an Austrian bond of sonship, all set in the reversed hand of a document from Loudun. Only the eighth article stands without a source. Every pact before this one left a way out, whether by a saint, a priest, a wager, or plain luck. This is the first that closes the door and says so in writing. It took fifteen centuries to draft a

contract that cannot be undone, and here it is, waiting only for a name, a date, and a vein.[17]

17. *Note from Contracts.* Article the Eighth is ours. It is the single clause in this deed that no one before us thought to write, and it is the one we would defend to the last comma. Every ancestor left a door open, out of oversight or mercy or simple failure of nerve. We found the door, and we closed it. The history in this book is, from where we sit, the story of that door, and this is the page on which it shu

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Everything in this book is drawn from the historical and literary record, and, wherever a text is quoted, from editions in the public domain. Marlowe is quoted from the early printings of *Doctor Faustus*. Goethe is given in Bayard Taylor's translation of 1870. The Grand Grimoire, the Grimorium Verum, and the Grimoire of Honorius are quoted from A. E. Waite's translations of 1911. The story of Theophilus follows the medieval life carried into the *Golden Legend*. Grandier follows the record of the Loudun trial. Haizmann follows the Mariazell file later examined by Freud. The crossroads chapter draws on Washington Irving and on the folklore of the American South. Readers who wish to go further will find all of it without difficulty, and most of it for nothing.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The engravings are reproduced from public-domain sources. The demon portraits, Lucifuge Rofocale among them, are from Louis Le Breton's plates for Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal* (1863). The Goetic Circle of Pacts is from A. E. Waite's *Book of Ceremonial Magic* (1911). The pact of Urbain Grandier is reproduced from the surviving trial document. The Faust plates are Rembrandt's etching of about 1652 and Eugène Delacroix's lithographs of 1828. The full source and holding institution for each plate are listed with the image at final layout.

DISCLAIMER

This is a true history published by an untrue company. The events, people, books, and contracts described in these pages are real, and are set down as accurately as the sources allow. The Management is not real. Leslie is not real. Satan’s Shop sells no souls, and nothing in this book is an instruction, an invocation, or an invitation to attempt one. No pact is offered here, and none would work. Any resemblance between the specimen deed at the back and a binding agreement is a matter of history, and, our lawyers assure us, unenforceable.

COLOPHON

This book was compiled from the surviving record and set in the manner of the trade. Its engravings are older than the company that publishes them, and were taken from public archives that the company does not own and could not corrupt. It was proofread twice, once for errors and once for opportunities. Only the errors were removed.

Set by the Management. Overseen, reluctantly, by Leslie, Contracts. There is no Leslie.